



Statement On Racial Equity June 2016

At the January 2016 meeting of its Management Committee the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance approved a simple change to its Mission Statement, as follows:

The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance (CWFA) collaborates with employers and other workforce stakeholders to increase employment, ~~and~~ earnings and racial equity for underprepared workers in the Chicago region.

Although this change is only the insertion of two words, the Funder Alliance feels it is significant and therefore merits a full explanation of both the meaning of the change and the reasons behind it.

Racial Equity As a Priority for the Funder Alliance

The Funder Alliance recognizes that a variety of forms of racism are root causes of many challenges facing underprepared workers and are a significant barrier to raising their employment and earnings. Over a century of racial segregation and discriminatory actions and policies, both intentional and unintentional, have produced and perpetuate disparate access to employment and workforce development opportunities for generations of our region’s residents. As a result, racial and ethnic minorities are under-represented in higher paying jobs in almost every industry category, and over-represented in our region’s population of unemployed and underemployed.

The Funder Alliance defines racial equity as situational fairness that results in employment outcomes that can no longer be attributed to a person’s race or ethnicity, or the legacies of racial discrimination. The Funder Alliance believes that increasing racial equity and closing racial gaps in outcomes requires the following:

- Applying resources as needed to advance equity and mitigate legacies of racism.
- Removing barriers for underprepared individuals, families, and communities.
- Tailoring program and policy responses to the specific situations faced by individuals, families and communities.
- Changing policies that perpetuate racially disparate outcomes.

At present the Funder Alliance is still working to put together the building blocks of a comprehensive approach to racial equity in its work, which it believes will eventually include:

Utilization of a shared language	Recognition of the need for a structural analysis
Understanding of a structural perspective	Systemic application of a racial equity impact analysis
Effectively communicating the benefits accruing to all as a result of racially equitable work	Reliance on disaggregated data that advances the understanding of how different groups are differently situated and helps determine the success of specific strategies for different populations

The Funder Alliance has been working with [ABFE](#) and [Race Matters Institute](#) for over a year on these building blocks through staff and board training. The Mission Statement change and the adoption of a Racial Equity Impact Analysis for all investments are the first steps in what will be an ongoing and evolving effort.